

PRACTICE-BASED: ADAPTING PROGRAM DELIVERY TO MEET YOUNG PEOPLE'S NEEDS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC

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Background/Purpose:

This presentation will describe a collaboration between Ballarat Community Health (BCH) and headspace Ballarat to support year-9 secondary students learning remotely during COVID-19 and into the future.

Approach:

Pre-existing relationship and sexuality health education programs were redesigned from face-to-face delivery to pre-recorded and live-streamed sessions. Utilising online polling software enabled our staff to interact with students as they worked through each video. At the end of term, representatives from BCH and headspace provided a live zoom session to answer all questions students have asked anonymously. This provided the face to our service, enabled further clarification and for students to have their questions answered 'in-person'. Online polling software also enabled the program to successfully evaluate the process of delivery and impacts on student learning.

Outcomes/Impact:

The online recordings were piloted with 180-students from two secondary schools in Ballarat. Evaluation revealed young people found the presentations engaging and increased their knowledge and attitudes around STIs, contraception and understanding of consent. Further, also increased their confidence in accessing our services at BCH and headspace. Additional, unexpected advantages of the pre-recorded format were identified by respondents with many indicating they preferred the privacy of viewing the videos and that the format enabled them to learn at their own pace, free from judgement from peers, with ability to ask questions anonymously. Four secondary schools have since scheduled to participate in the program.

Innovation and Significance:

Moving into the future, as school incursions and/or excursions are still not viable due to COVID-19 restrictions, schools are able to continue to utilise the videos within the classroom setting to ensure an increase knowledge about relationships and sexual health issues, health services, referral pathways and ongoing support. Further, the videos are also being utilised in out-of-home care residential housing for young people; and have generated significant interest from other community health services across Victoria.

Disclosure of Interest Statement:

None